

Montana
Energy
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November - December

Evidence is accumulating daily that coal development may result in the greatest and most drastic changes in Montana in decades. A glance at the coal fact sheet, accompanying this newsletter, will confirm this statement.

Federal and state research program results are indicating that both the socio-economic and environmental impacts of expected coal development will be massive. Construction of Colstrip Units I and II and the mining activities in Rosebud County have imposed severe burdens upon county and local government coffers.

Montana still has choices to make with respect to coal development activities. In order to meet the responsibility properly, citizens and government officials should become familiar with all relevant information detailing development impacts and development choices. To do otherwise is to allow Montana's future to be determined by default. Citizens and local government officials also should become familiar with state statutes and programs that are pertinent to development problems. Future issues of the Newsletter will address these matters.

Given proper information, citizens and their government will be in a better position to plan the course of their future. Without such planning, we may be forced to repeat the boom and bust tragedies that have marked earlier pages of Montana's history.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
DEVELOPS RURAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAM

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The Comprehensive Health Planning Division of the Department of Health and Environmental Sciences has received a two-year, \$175,000 grant from the

Old West Regional Commission. The purpose of the grant is to supplement the existing and overloaded health care delivery system in rural areas of Montana. Entitled the Community Health Representative Program, the program initially will focus on ten communities within the coal development area of Southeastern Montana. These communities will be chosen on the basis of interest and the availability of a local nurse. Once the program is underway, funds will be available to provide medical supplies and to support training and salaries for the local nurses. In addition, funds will be expended in support of local, non-profit corporations, formed to administer the local program. Interested persons should contact Ms. Mary Jane Crigler, Division of Comprehensive Health Planning, 510 Logan, Helena, Mt. (449-3121).

RESEARCH PROJECTS

U.S. Energy Prospects: An Engineering Viewpoint. A report prepared by the Task Force on Energy of the National Academy of Engineering, Washington, D.C. Available from the Printing and Publishing Office, National Academy of Sciences, 2101 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20418.

The Task Force concludes that, by any standard, the achievement of energy self-sufficiency in one decade would require enormous efforts, but assumes the undesirability of a wartime "crash" program with its implications of government direction and intervention. Basically, it would be necessary to reduce the consumption of energy voluntarily, by means of increased efficiencies and reduced wastefulness, and to develop the fuel resources available in the United States with the best technology now available. Simultaneously, a major program would need to be pursued in research and development on advanced techniques in energy production and conservation for the future. Central to this report are the roles of government, industry and the public in advancing a comprehensive energy program in the next decade.

Implications of Higher Fuel Prices for Rural Development Policy, Lynn M. Daft, Senior Economist with the Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, Washington, D.C.

The overriding local issue as it pertains to energy development revolves around the process of managing change (whether it be growth or decline) and having the institutional capability to do so in a way that is considered not only acceptable, but desirable by a majority of the local people. Here are some issues localities will be encountering with great frequency:

(1) In areas of rapid growth, how are people on fixed incomes to be protected from rapidly rising prices?

(2) How are the undesirable characteristics (social and economic) of the "company town" to be avoided or mitigated?

(3) How are the external costs and benefits associated with adjustment to be internalized so as to facilitate that adjustment? Some of these costs and benefits remain internal to the community but many spill over beyond. In the case of coal extraction, for example, should a tax be levied on the extraction to cover external costs? If so, who should levy the tax and how should receipts be distributed?

(4) How do we build future adaptability into the boom towns now under construction? How do we avoid the construction of excess community infrastructure capacity?

(5) What are the secondary employment effects likely to be associated with fuel extraction/energy generation activities? Do they offer a basis for the development of a diversified economy that can maintain its viability beyond the boom period?

(6) A variety of internal community conflicts are likely to arise between those who stand to gain and those who stand to lose from the changes underway. Can local government provide an objective forum for consideration of all points of view, including resolution of the conflicts?

(7) Likewise, there will be many conflicts that cross community and state boundaries. Again, how do we identify, consider and resolve them?

Surface Coal Mining and Reclamation of Particular Interest to the Great Plains States, A Selected Bibliography, Norman L. Dalsted and F. Larry Leistritz, Department of Agricultural Economics, North Dakota Agricultural Experimental Station, North Dakota State University, Fargo, North Dakota.

How Southeastern Montanans View the Coal Development Issue, Raymond L. Gold, University of Montana, Western Wildlands, October 1, 1974.

The paper's intent is to call attention to the major social and personal concerns of the many southeastern Montanans who are confronted by imminent industrialization of the area's vast coal resources.

Social Consequences of Boom Growth in Wyoming, ElDean V. Kohrs, Ph.D. Paper given at the Rocky Mountain American Association of the Advancement of Science meeting, July 24 - 26, 1974, Laramie, Wyoming (MEAC has this paper available to interested persons).

Dr. Kohrs discusses the very real potential for "boom town" development in Wyoming. The references to past experiences in Gillette show the necessity of planning for the survival of a life style which will be adequate for "old-timers and newcomers".